

## Brief Encounter; How a Dragonfly made our Day

By CHARLES F. COWAN\*

In June 1960 I stumbled upon the classic locality of the "rare" dragonflies *Somatochlora arctica* and *Aeshna caerulea*, securing good photographs of the male of the latter which started my collection in the order Odonata.

In early July 1968 I made a quick tour of part of mid-Scotland, to look for signs of *A. caerulea* outside its few listed localities and to try to snap its female. On a brisk forenoon the cold was tempered by frequent spells of bright sunshine as I explored the upper reaches of a tributary of Glen Spean. The common *Cordulegaster boltonii* was patrolling a small lochan just west of the track and I soon saw *A. caerulea* on the heathery knolls east of it. In no time, I had her portrait. Camera in hand and still on knees, I relaxed only, to my acute embarrassment, to see that I was being watched by a young couple out for a walk.

The usual greetings had, perforce, to include an explanation of my peculiar pursuit and were followed afterwards by the shout "There's a huge one here!". It would be *Cordulegaster*, of course, but the sun had gone in again so, wet knees notwithstanding, I went over and was told "behind that bush". It was not quite cool and, on a hunch, I went round the bush, saw the insect, and gently insinuated my fingers under its feet. I came from behind the bush. "Eek!" she cried. "Don't move quickly, or you'll frighten it" I said: "It's only the Great Golden-ringed Dragonfly". "But doesn't it sting?".

So, while its life-history, habits and food were briefly explained ("Look at its meat-safe under the wings"), the majestic insect was quietly transferred to her fingers from mine, with the remark that in earlier times there existed species with wings over a foot long. It seemed as interested in us as we in it, and before long was making a magnificent brooch.

Then the cloud cleared the sun. We moved to shelter it from the breeze; it revved-up its wings and soon lifted gently away. "Oh, thank you so much; you've absolutely made my day" she said, and with those parting words she made mine.

But really it was all due to the dragonfly.

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NEW LOCALITIES FOR COLEOPHORA PRUNIFOLIAE DOETS IN 1980. — This recently discovered Coleophorid seems to be present in more localities than at first imagined. I have collected the pre-hibernation cases from Fobbing Marsh in Essex, and from the renowned Pevensey Levels in East Sussex; the latter constitutes, a first county record. — M. HADLEY, 19-20 Belgrave Square, London SW1X 8PY.